

EDEN AUTISM SERVICES

**Looking Ahead...
A Summary of
Eden's 2014–2016
Strategic Plan**





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Message

*from the Chairman of the Board
February 2014*



MARIE K. GARY
*Chair, Eden Board of Trustees
Eden Parent*

This edition of the Eden Autism Services Strategic Plan continues with two of Eden’s prior strategic plan commitments: to provide quality programs and to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of our organization. A third and new commitment of “growth” has been added to the plan. We believe the goals of Quality, Sustainability, and Growth are integral to Eden’s future success.

Eden is committed to maintaining its current core offering of services. Opportunities or considerations for growth will be reviewed in the context of mission fit and ability to provide for sustainability. Strategically, growth must prove financially viable and further enhance Eden’s overall quality of services and future sustainability.

We acknowledge that government agencies are the primary funding sources for our programs, and that they are increasingly experiencing difficult fiscal challenges themselves. Inadequate public funding, therefore, will remain a major challenge for our organization. In response to this, Eden’s strategic direction will focus on managing resources with an eye on cost-effectiveness, adult endowment, and mission related revenue opportunities.

Throughout our history, Eden’s program quality has been the direct result of the work of Eden’s most valuable asset—its staff. Every day, with hard work and dedication, they continue to create miracles and improve the lives of those entrusted to our care. We are also grateful for the dedication and contributions of our Board of Trustees, who provide this organization with strong guidance and leadership.

Eden’s mission is “to improve the lives of children and adults with autism and their families by providing a range of community-based services to meet specific needs throughout the lifespan.” We look forward to carrying on this amazing legacy with continued and collaborative support from both our stakeholders and community at large.

*Chair, Eden Board of Trustees
Eden Parent*

I. MISSION

The mission of the Eden Autism Services is to improve the lives of children and adults with autism and their families by providing a range of community-based services to meet specific needs throughout the lifespan.

II. VISION

Eden will be viewed as the standard of excellence for autism services in every community in which it provides services as distinguished by program quality, community presence, and financial strength (sustainability).

III. WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe our first responsibility is to Eden's children and adults with autism.

Our challenge is to educate and train our participants in order that they reach their full potential and enjoy a high quality of life. Each must be considered as an individual. We must respect their dignity and recognize their merit. We must keep abreast of current and well-established intervention strategies and tailor programs to the level of need and learning style for each child or adult.

Our second responsibility is to Eden's families.

We will empower and add to the family's understanding of autism and how they can help their children reach their full potential. We must be ever cognizant of the stresses that a family with an autistic individual encounters and diligent in our efforts to support the family members.

Our third responsibility is to the men and women who work for Eden Autism Services.

Our challenge is to make them feel professionally stimulated, valued and challenged. They must be trained and supported to offer the highest quality of programs possible. We must strive to give them a sense of pride in their jobs along with fair and competitive compensation. Working conditions must be clean, orderly and safe.

Our fourth responsibility is to the community at large.

We must be good neighbors to those in whose communities we offer services and continue to educate the community about autism. We should continue to offer community members opportunities to fulfill their spirit of volunteerism. In addition, we will provide cost-effective Outreach Services as a means to expand our brand and goodwill.

Our final responsibility is to those who support Eden Autism Services.

If we meet the first four of our responsibilities with success, and if we have actively communicated our progress and victories along the way, we believe that those who have supported Eden's programs will feel their contributions have made a significant difference in Eden's services and mission.

IV. STRATEGIC PLAN and OPERATING ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW

There are an estimated 1.7 million people in the United States living with an autism spectrum disorder. Individuals with autism, and their families, are faced with enormous challenges not only dealing with the inherent challenges of autism, but also the daunting task of securing funding for appropriate placement, services and resources.

In this environment of growing need for treatment services for individuals with autism, third-party funding agencies generally provide payment or reimbursement levels that make the provision of quality services very challenging.

New Jersey remains near the very top of the autism frequency list, with roughly 1 in 50 children diagnosed with the disorder by their eighth birthday, according to the statistics released by the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The explosive increase in the nationwide rate is due at least in part to increased awareness and detection. New Jersey's rate continues to be higher than many states that don't have as many resources to diagnose and treat autism.

Given the operating environment realities, Eden must continue to develop additional mission related revenue sources to fill the gap between government-funded payments for services and the costs associated with a well-run, high quality organization. On the expense and budgetary side of the ledger, Eden must also effectively manage the attendant costs of providing quality services and manage well the annual financial plan.

To help fill the gap between payment for services and the funds necessary for the organization to deliver high quality services and thrive long term, Eden will bolster efforts to increase the proceeds from charitable contributions, investment income, and the net proceeds from Outreach services and intellectual properties.

Third party feedback from family, stakeholder, and customer surveys recommended that Eden continue to make a coordinated effort to gain legislative support for public funding increases and, when advisable, join with other organizations of influence to add weight to those efforts. We will ensure that the advocacy and legislative efforts of Eden's constituencies are organized and coordinated to produce a cohesive effort that results in the effective and generous work of our board, staff, patrons and friends.



We will look within our own portfolio of services and expertise to develop products that advance Eden’s stature and evaluate opportunities to advance the organization’s reputation and accomplishments consistent with our mission and vision.

Eden’s Balanced Scorecard goals, measures, and targets are driven by the key Strategic Themes of Sustainability, Quality Programs, and Growth. The BSC helps to focus day to day operational actions and staff accountabilities, and align operations with the strategic intent of this plan. Our strategic plan will only be as productive as the implementation is successfully applied and how well the vision and goals align our efforts and resources across the organization.

Eden’s BSC is reviewed at regular intervals throughout the fiscal year to assess progress towards targets. The BSC also provides the Board of Directors with a consistent vehicle from which to assess on-going progress with respect to the Strategic Plan.

Every year Eden emphasizes, from within the strategic themes in its 3 year strategic plan, a select few initiatives to advance the organization’s progress toward realizing the strategic plan goals. This year we have the following three initiatives that we feel are important to our success.

- A. The Planning Committee will develop specific steps and criteria that are followed when considering any collaborative ventures with another organization, should such a possibility arise.
- B. Over the long term, Eden needs to substantially improve its endowment size. A roadmap to get there will be the responsibility of our Development staff and Development Committee to plot out and construct.
- C. Eden will develop a plan for residential housing that delineates the due diligence processes we will follow to establish the viability of any consideration to add or change residential housing.

These three FY 2014 initiatives will help us establish solid processes that will benefit Eden well into the future. Their effective development and implementation will also play a key role in the success of the goals within the three main strategic plan themes.



V. EDEN’S FY 2014–2016 STRATEGIC THEMES

Two of Eden’s strategic themes from the previous strategic plan, Quality Programs and Sustainability, remain as critical as ever to our mission, our participants and families, and our long-term success. These two themes will continue as two of the three cornerstones in our new strategic plan. For the 2014–2016 plan, we have added the theme of “Growth” as the third theme. Growth, when pursued pragmatically and in line with Eden’s mission and strategic themes of Sustainability and Quality, strengthens the organization, benefits the communities in which we operate, and augments the positive impact of the other strategic themes.

Eden’s 3 Strategic Themes in the FY 2014–2016 Strategic Plan are:

1 SUSTAINABILITY

Eden will continue to improve the delivery of transparent information to both senior management and the Board of Directors. This will enable prudent and time sensitive monitoring of Eden’s financial performance against budget and allow for mid-course corrections when needed. It is Eden’s intentions to acquire and maintain an appropriate level of resources to weather downturns and take advantage of opportunities. The organization will be managed in such a way as to deliver the financial and program achievements that support the successful delivery of Eden’s mission.

2 QUALITY PROGRAMS

Eden will provide individualized, science-based, data-driven, best practice programming, as appropriate throughout the lifespan, and in a safe and humane environment to maximize each participant’s personal, social and developmental growth. Aspects of quality must be open to evolve based on industry information, changing contexts, and improving understanding of the nature of autism’s challenges. Eden will provide for third party evaluations of both quality and customer satisfaction.

3 GROWTH

Eden will consider growth opportunities in the context of mission fit and ability to provide for organizational sustainability. Growth must prove financially viable and provide for continued quality of services while advancing the mission of Eden. All programs and proposed new ventures and products must meet the criteria of a four-part test: fit with mission, fit with strategy, critical to key markets, and are financially prudent and sustainable. Eden recognizes that sensible and productive growth initiatives, aligned with the mission and financial capabilities, will support the progress in each of the other strategic themes of Quality Programs and Sustainability.

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